

## Message Text

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15  
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 11930

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: ENRG PFOR EG IS US XE  
SUBJ: GULF OF SUEZ - AUG 31-SEP1 MARINER INCIDENT: DEBRIEFING OF CREW

REF: (A) CAIRO 11702, (B) CAIRO 11703, (C) CAIRO 11704,  
(D) CAIRO 11779

1. DURING CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR SEPTEMBER 3, ROSS CRAIG, AMOCO/EGYPT MANAGER, GAVE FOLLOWING DETAILS ON MARINER INCIDENT AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 1, BASED ON DEBRIEFING OF MARINER CREW. SOME DETAILS REMAIN THE SAME AS RELATED CAIRO REFS (INCLUDING PREPLANNED NATURE OF MARINER'S DEPARTURE IN RESPONSE TO ISRAELI INTERCEPT, GOE CHANGE OF MIND RE HOLDING FAST, SLOWNESS WITH WHICH ORDER TO HOLD FAST WAS PASSED TO MARINER, AND FACT THAT "ULTIMATUM" GIVEN TO MARINER TO LEAVE AT 0100 SEPTEMBER 1); SOME DETAILS ARE DIFFERENT (INCLUDING FACT THAT THERE WAS NO SECOND CONTACT WITH ISRAELI GUN BOAT, CREW HEARD HELICOPTER MOTORS AND SAW MOVING, FLASHING RED AND GREEN LIGHTS, BUT DID NOT ACTUALLY SIGHT HELICOPTERS). APART FROM INITIAL ULTIMATUM, STORY IS CLOSER TO ISRAELI VERSION THAN TO THE INITIALLY GIVEN US BY AMOCO.

2. ACCORDING TO CRAIG GAME PLANS FOR MARINER MISSION, AS DEVELOPED BY AMOCO IN CLOSE COORDINATION WITH EGPC, WAS FOR SHIP TO PROCEED TO SITE AND, IF INTERCEPTED, TO RETREAT FOLLOWING VERBAL OBJECTIONS, CRAIG EXPLAINED THAT MORE WORK BOATS THAN NECESSARY HAD BEEN DESPATCHED TO PREPARE SITESO ISRAELIS WOULD BE WELL AWARE OF ACTIVITY. PREVIOUSLY CRAIG POINT OUT  
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ISRAELIS HAD USUALLY STOPPED WORK BOATS. THIS TIME, HOWEVER,

ISRAELIS DID NOT INTERCEPT WORK BOATS AND ANCHOR BUOYS PLACED WITHOUT INCIDENT. MARINER ALSO APPROACHED SITE, AND WAS SECURED TO ALL IT EIGHT ANCHORS WITHOUT INCIDENT. FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF SECURING PROCESS, MARINER DETECTED ISRAELI BOAT ABOUT 3,000 FEET AWAY FROM SHIP AT 1100 AUGUST 31. ISRAELI SHIP MAINTAINED THAT POSITION UNTIL 1700 WHEN IT PULLED UP TO US FLAG WORK BOAT "EVELYN TIDE" AND ORDERED HER TO RAISE MARINER'S ANCHORS, SAYING THAT RIG WAS IN ISRAELI WATERS AND WOULD HAVE TO MOVE 3 AND ONE-HALF MILES WEST. (PATROL BOAT WAS NUMBERED 903). AMERICAN CAPTAIN OF EVELYN TIDE TOLD ISRAELI PATROL BOAT CAPTIAN THAT HE COULD NOT INITIATE SUCH ACTION WITHOUT ORDERS FROM MARINER FORMAN. ISRAELI CAPTIAN THEN APPROACHED MARINER WITH GUNS UNCOVERED BUT NOT MANNED AND HAD EXCHANGE WITH JIM BLUE, SANTA FE REP IN CHARGE OF THE RIG. ISRAELI CAPTIAN TOLD BLUE HE WAS IN ISRAELI WATERS AND WOULD HAVE TO MOVE 3 AND ONE-HALF MILES WEST. BLUE SAID HE COULD NOT MOVE BECAUSE ALL OF HIS ANCHORS HAD BEEN PLACED. ISRAELI CAPTAIN SAID WEATHER WAS GOOD AND ANCHORS SHOULD BE RAISED AND RIG MOVED 3 AND ONE-HALF MILES WEST. ISRAELI CAPTAIN THEN ASKED BLUE HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE TO RAISE ANCHORS. BLUE REPLIED ABOUT EIGHT HOURS. ACCORDING BLUE, ISRAELI CAPTAIN THEN SIAD QUOTE YOU HAVE UNTIL 1 A.M. TO MOVE OUT OF ISRAELI WATERS. UNQUOTE. ACCORDING TO CRAIG THERE WERE SOME FURTHER EXCHANGES IN WHICH ISRAELI CAPTIAN REFUSED TO RESCIND HIS ORDER TO LEAVE AREA.

3. DURING PERIOD FROM FIRST CONTACT WITH ISRAELI PATROL BOAT UNTIL MARINER'S DEPARTURE, RADAR ABOARD MARINER AND OTHER WORK BOATS PICKED UP 5 PATROL BOATS STANDING ONE AND ONE-HALF MILES EAST OF MARINER IN A CRESCENT SHAPT. ACCORDING TO PREARRANGED PLANS, MARINER AND WORK BOATS BEGAIN HAULING THEIR ANCHORS IN PREPARATION TO LEAVE SITE. WHEN AMOCO'S ORDER, BASED ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM HILAL TO HOLD FAST REACHED MARINER , AT APPROXIMATELY 8 P.M. AUGUST 31, SEVEN OF EIGHT ANCHORS HAD ALREADY BEEN LIFTED. THIS PUT RIG IN DANGEROUS POSITION AND FOREMAN FELT HE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO RETRIEVE FINAL ANCHOR AND HOOK UP TOW LINE TO WORK BOAT. SHIPS REMAINED ON SITE UNTIL ABOUT MIDNIGHT, WHEN CAPTAIN OF WORK BOAT, WHICH BY THEN HAD MARINER IN TWO, SAID HE WOULD NOT STAY PAST DEADLINE GIBEN BY ISRAELI GUN BOAT.IT WAS IN FACT CAPTIAN OF WORK BOAT WHO ACTUALLY MADE DECISION TO DEPART SITE 304.1. FINAL

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DECISION PRECIPITATED BY FACT THAT CREW OF MARINER AND WORK BOATS HAEARD HELICOPTERS ABOUT 2400 AUGUST 31, AND SAW MOVING, FLASHING RED AND GREEN LIGHTS TO EAST OF MARINER. FROM RAS SHUKAIR, THESE LIGHTS APPEARED TO BE OVER THE MARINER, HENCE REPORT HELICOPTERS HOVERING OVER HELOPAD. DURING DEBRIEFING HOWEVER, AMOCO LEARNED THAT THEY WERE ACTUALLY A MILE AND ONE-HALF EAST. THERE IS NO QUESTION, ACCORDING CRAIG, ABOUT CREW'S HAVING HEARD HELICOPTERS IN AREA AND HAVING

SEEN FLASHING RED AND GREEN LIGHTS.

4. CRAIG CONFIRMED THAT THERE WAS NO FURTHER CONTACT WITH ISRAELI PATROL BOAT. INITIAL REPORTS OF SUCH CONTACT (AS WELL AS CLOSE-IN HOVERING BY HELICOPTERS) WERE MISINTERPRETATIONS OF CASUAL RADIO CONTACTS BETWEEN VARIOUS WORK BOATS AND MARINER ON PART OF EGYPTIAN RADIO OPERATOR AT RAS SHUKAIR. CRAIG SAID THAT, DURING OPERATIONS, THOSE IN CAIRO WHO WERE MONITORING SITUATION WERE UNAWARE OF HIGH VOLUME VOICE TRAFFIC BETWEEN WORK BOATS, MARINER AND OTHER RIGS IN AREA. REGRETTABLY, ONLY PERSONNEL AT RAS SHUKAIR WERE EGYPTIANS HENCE MISINTERPRETATION OF RADIO MESSAGE. CRAIG REITERATED THT ALL ON BOARD WHO HEARD CONVERSTATION BETWEEN BLUE AND ISRAELI CAPTIAN CONFIRMED FACT THAT CAPTIAN HAD GIVEN BLUE UNTIL 1 A.M. TO MOVE. CRAIG SAID THAT THIS STATEMENT WAS INTERPRETED BY MARINER FOREMAN AS ULTIMATUM TO LEAVE. IN HIS JUDGMENT , SUCH INTERPRETATION WAS CORRECT

5. IN ORDER FORESTALL FUTURE SUCH MISUNDERSTANDINGS, THERE WILL BE AMERICAN RADIO OPERATOR IN CONTROL AT RAS SHUKAIR AS WELL AS IN CAIRO TO RELAY MESSAGES FROM MARINER.

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## Message Attributes

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